



The first rotation of the deployment is well underway and I am sure some of you may be taking to heart that sentiment that what can go wrong during a deployment will go wrong. So I would like to share some situations I encounter. Maybe you will identify with one or more and say, "Hey, I thought I was the only one." The whole point of this is that you are not the only one.

A Key Volunteer (KV) never contacted me!

There could be many reasons why a KV did not contact you. The most common reason is that we have outdated or inaccurate information. Remember that it is your or your Marine or Sailor's responsibility to notify the command and Key Volunteer Network (KVN) of new or temporary contact information. Sometimes a KV calls and leaves a message. The family member does not know what the KVN is or thinks we are (gasp!) telemarketers, so he or she does not return the call. Do not be afraid to contact a KV, KVC or Family Readiness Officer (FRO) yourself. Phone numbers are listed at the end of every newsletter, the FRO's phone number is located on the website and you are always welcome to call me, Christina Galvez, KVC CLR-15, at (760) 430-0202. I will get you in touch with your Network. The KVN is a two-way communication network and it is completely appropriate for you to contact us. In fact, I often have many business cards with me and hand them out to anyone, regardless of whether or not they are on the roster. This is so you have a phone number to call if you need it. And if you encounter another family member in our unit that has no point of contact and needs one, feel free to share my contact information.

I don't want to go to the social because I don't know anybody in the unit.

That is exactly why you should go to a unit or KVN hosted event. More than likely, you will not be the only one who does not know anybody there. Introduce yourself to a KV and she can then introduce you to other family members. I know that can be a hard step to take, but you will be glad you took it. If your Marine or Sailor is a career service member, you may be in this situation many, many times. Introducing yourself becomes second nature. It sounds intimidating the first time, but it will get easier with practice.

I feel bad because I don't know anything about the Marine Corps.

Don't feel bad- I am a Marine Corps "brat" and then married into the Marine Corps. Just last year while speaking with the regimental Commanding Officer, I referred to a "formation" as "when the Marines all stand at attention in nice, straight lines." Take a LINKS course. LINKS stands for Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills and is a spouse-to-spouse orientation for spouses new to the Marine Corps. Experienced spouses address all aspects of the military lifestyle. For more information and for a schedule of classes, call (760) 725-2335. In addition, there are other resources and literature that your KV can provide you that cover the basics of Marine Corps or Navy life.

I don't want to be a KV because I am new to the military.

You do not need to have previous experience as a KV to become one. In addition, there is no minimum number of years you need to be married to become a KV. I have worked with KVs who have been married for years and others who have been married for only a few months. You will take a simple training course and then you can begin your KV duties. And don't forget, you will always have backup- other KVs, your KVC and KVA, and the FRO. It is okay to say, "I don't know, but I will find out and call back." Ask around- I still do that all the time!

I don't have time to volunteer.

While we are always eager to gain more KVs (hint, hint), simply being on a KVN contact roster does not obligate you to volunteer in any way. Being on the contact roster means you will now be added to a phone tree and email distribution list. After initial contact is made, most of the communication will be via email. You will begin receiving email about updates from deployed units, the quarterly newsletter, announcements, job opportunities, unit events, training courses, etc. If at any time you want to be removed from the roster, let your KV know and we will remove you from the contact roster.

I am uncomfortable contacting a KV because my spouse is a Lance Corporal.

Spouses do not have rank and neither do KVs. If the KVN hosts a social, it is not an Officers' Wives' social. Even if you hear "Key Volunteer Coordinator," that is just an organizational term designed to facilitate communication. Maybe it is intimidating because you are new to the Marine Corps. Everyone was new to the Marine Corps at some time.

I had a bad experience with the KVN and don't want to be contacted by them.

This sometimes happens and it is unfortunate. All units' Networks are different. If you had a bad experience at one unit, that does not necessarily mean you will encounter the same with your current unit's KVN. Regardless of where you had the bad experience, email or call me and discuss it with me. Your comments may be discussed with others in the program but specific names or units will be kept in confidence. Maybe you will find out you do want to be on our roster or even volunteer.

Several things will occur during the next few months. There will be a CLR-15 change of command where Col Hudson will turn over command to Col Vincent. There may be personnel turnover in your spouse's unit. Finally, there may be KVN turnover. This is normal activity and your KV may change at some point during the summer. If you are ever concerned about your status on the KVN Contact Roster, call your KV or your KVC.

Return, Reunion and Reunite (RRR) Workshops will be scheduled in anticipation of the first rotation's return from Iraq. The RRR Workshop provides an opportunity for spouses of deployed Marines and Sailors to discuss, share and learn ways to successfully transition through the return and reunion process. I strongly encourage spouses to attend this workshop.

Finally, the KVN will increase its recruiting efforts by distributing flyers, email or speaking at unit functions. Turnover can be a challenging period for us as well as we attempt to keep our numbers up. Volunteering has been an extremely positive experience that I will always treasure. You will meet other spouses, learn so much more about the Marine Corps than you ever thought possible and may even learn new skills. Depending on how much time you are able to donate, you may have the opportunity to work on newsletters, the website, or even become a KVC. Contact your KV, KVC or me if you are interested!

As always, I am honored to be serving as CLR-15's Key Volunteer Coordinator and I wish all of our Marines and Sailors a swift and safe return home.

**Christina Galvez
KVC, CLR-15**